

RN97075

AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL AND NOTICE OF APPEAL

Serial No: 09/462,995

The Commissioner is also hereby authorized to charge any other payment associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account **No. 18-1171**.

In this connection, the Commissioner is in particular hereby authorized to charge payment of:

- any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16, and
- any patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17, to Deposit Account No.

18-1171.

Reconsideration of the outstanding rejection is respectfully requested in light of the following amendment and remark.

In the claims:

Please cancel claims 22-28, 30, and 38.

Please amend claim 39 as follows:

39. (Twice amended) A process for oil extraction comprising the step of using, at a temperature between 100 and 140°C, a guar-free drilling fluid comprising a xanthan gum having a percentage of acetyl groups in the range 0 to 3%, said xanthan gum being in the form of a polypentamer, at least one compound which increases the ionic strength of the fluid, and at least one fluid loss control agent.

Please cancel claims 40-45.

Please add the following new claims 46-60 :

46. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the drilling fluid comprises 0.01% to 2% of xanthan gum.

47. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the percentage is 0 to 2%.

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48. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the fluid loss control agent is selected from the group consisting of cellulose compounds, polyacrylamides, high molecular weight polyacrylates, succinoglycanes, native starch, native starch derivatives, and charcoal.

49. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the compound increasing the ionic strength of the fluid is a salt of mineral or organic acid.

50. (New) A process according to claim 49, wherein the salt is an alkali metal halide, alkaline-earth metal halide, a sulphate, carbonate, bicarbonate, silicate, phosphate, an alkali metal formate, alkaline-earth metal formate, alkali metal acetate, or an alkaline-earth metal acetate.

51. (New) A process according to claim 50, wherein the compound increasing the ionic strength of the fluid is an alkali or alkaline-earth metal chloride.

52. (New) A process according to claim 50, wherein the compound increasing the ionic strength of the fluid is a sodium silicate.

53. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the compound increasing the ionic strength of the fluid is present in said fluid in an amount of 5000 to 110000 parts per million.

54. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein said fluid further comprises a thinner or dispersing agent in a quantity of 0 to 1% with respect to the total fluid weight.

55. (New) A process according to claim 54, wherein the thinner or dispersing agent is selected from the group consisting of polyphosphates, tannins, lignosulphonates, lignin derivatives, peats, lignites, polyacrylates and polynaphthalene sulphonates.

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56. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein said fluid further comprises further comprises an oxygen scavenger in an amount of 0 to 0.25% with respect to the total fluid weight.

57. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein said fluid further comprises a weighting compound selected from the group consisting of alkaline-earth metal sulphates, carbonates, silicates, alkaline-earth metal bromides, zinc bromides, and iron oxides.

58. (New) A process according to claim 54, wherein said fluid further comprises at least one mineral colloid selected from the group consisting of attapulgite, barite and bentonite.

59. (New) A process according to claim 39, further comprising water.

60. (New) A process according to claim 39, wherein the oil extraction comprises well development operations, drilling operations, work-over operations, completion operations or oilfield production.

Marked-up amended claims according to 37 C.F.R. 1.121 are submitted in the attached document. Added matter is shown by underline and deleted matter is shown by brackets. It is asserted that these amendments do not add new matter and are supported by the specification and claims as originally filed. The support for amended claim 39 can be more particularly found on page 1, lines 4-6, and claim 45. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.